

### IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended)                      A multiple access communication system comprising at least one primary station (2) and a plurality of secondary stations (~~32, 34, 36~~), the primary station (2) and the secondary stations (~~32, 34, 36~~) being interconnected via a network, the secondary stations (~~32, 34, 36~~) being arranged for transmitting return signals in a return signal frequency band to the primary station (2), the secondary stations (~~32, 34, 36~~) being further arranged for transmitting the return signals in only a part of the return signal frequency band containing relatively little noise, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the network comprises means (40) for mapping **a first set of** the return signals **of the plurality of secondary stations** onto **a first portion of** the return signal frequency band **and mapping a second set of return signals of the plurality of secondary stations onto a second portion of the return signal frequency band.**

2. (Currently Amended)                      A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the means (40) for mapping the return signals are located in a part of the network where relatively little noise occurs.

3. (Currently Amended)                      A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the part of the return signal frequency band is an upper part of the return channel band, the means (40) for mapping the return signals comprising a down converter (~~48, 50~~) for down converting the frequency of at least one of the return signals.

4. (Currently Amended)                      A multiple access communication system according to Claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the down converter (~~48, 50~~) comprises a block down converter.

5. (Currently Amended)                      A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the network comprises a coaxial cable network.

6. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the network comprises a hybrid fiber/coax network.